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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 6 May 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Grauls ..... (Belgium)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/3/CAF/6)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Adoption of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic (PBC/3/CAF/L.1)

2. **The Chairperson** drew attention to an update by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) in the Central African Republic; his recent activities as Chairperson of the configuration; a briefing paper on peacebuilding in the Central African Republic; and a document containing updated data on external assistance to the Central African Republic, which would be distributed to members shortly. He also drew attention to the draft Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic (PBC/3/CAF/L.1), which had been developed as part of a consultative process involving all major stakeholders. He took it that members wished to adopt the draft Strategic Framework.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **The Chairperson** said that the Strategic Framework symbolized the commitment of the Government and people of the Central African Republic to put an end to a long period of brutal violence, desolation and isolation, as well as of the international community's willingness to support the Central African Republic in achieving its objectives of stabilization and development. He planned to travel to Bangui on 21 May 2009, to attend the official launch of the Strategic Framework, and invited all interested members of the configuration to join him. In addition to reviewing the Strategic Framework every six months, regular discussions would be held on the progress made in the priority areas identified by the Commission with the Central African Government.

5. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, welcomed the adoption of the Strategic Framework and expressed full support for its underlying principles. Development hubs were a key element of the recovery process, as they presented an opportunity for a peace dividend and for the long-term sustainability of the national economy. Continuous evaluation and monitoring of progress were also crucial to the success of the Strategic Framework. Reviews of progress made should be holistic and appropriate action should be taken where necessary to avert failure and achieve the desired results.

6. **Mr. Plevák** (European Community), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation were lengthy processes that required continuous attention and a spirit of compromise on the part of all parties. In the case of the Central African Republic, several recommendations from that dialogue must still be implemented. Security sector reform, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, should help to eliminate banditry, improve maintenance of law and order and protection of human rights, increase internal security and stop the intrusion of armed groups from neighbouring countries. Adequately trained and equipped soldiers should protect the citizens and borders of the Central African Republic. It was of the utmost importance that all parties respect the Strategic Framework and that the Government make the successful implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration a priority.

7. He urged the Government to strengthen its own capacities by expanding the State's authority beyond the capital and its immediate surroundings, increasing services provided to the population, and establishing good governance and internal mechanisms to help the Government fight corruption and ensure effective public services. Such activities must be based on principles such as responsibility, accountability, transparency, efficiency, participation and supremacy of law.

8. **Mr. Onestini** (European Community), speaking on behalf of the European Commission, said that it was important to implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Council; in that connection, he supported the Central African Republic's efforts in fighting against impunity and its full cooperation with the International Criminal Court. While the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process continued to be a key element of the Strategic Framework, the delays in implementing it and the lack of clarity regarding its funding were regrettable. He supported the early appointment of an electoral commission for the planning of the 2010 elections and the establishment of development hubs, which would help mitigate the effects of the economic crisis.

9. **Ms. Hollifield** (World Bank) said that the World Bank Group was working closely with the African Development Bank on a joint partnership strategy for the period 2009-2012; the strategy was closely aligned with the Government's priorities as contained in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the outcomes of the inclusive political dialogue. The strategy focused on two critical pillars: the development of institutional capacity and economic governance; and the rehabilitation and development of socio-economic infrastructure in the Central African Republic. The strategy also explicitly recognized the linkages between direct peacebuilding activities, the development of Government capacity and the need for investment in economic and social infrastructure.

10. The Central African Republic continued to face a critical financing gap; as an aid orphan, it had limited but emerging capacity to manage its needs with domestic resources. The World Bank was also quite limited with regard to the resources it was able to provide. Support from the International Development Association (IDA) was especially constrained by the performance-based allocation system: some $33 million in total resources had been made available by IDA 15; by the midterm review of IDA, only approximately $7 million would remain uncommitted.

11. The World Bank was seeking to enable the Central African Republic to benefit from diverse resources from the international donor community, many of which were managed or supported by the World Bank itself. She commended the Government's efforts to move quickly under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC Initiative) from the decision point to the completion point, which it was expected to reach in June. Nevertheless, there remained a sizeable gap between development needs and donor support; she looked forward to working with the Commission and Government authorities on developing further donor support and improving donor coordination.

12. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process was indispensable to maintaining the momentum generated by the inclusive political dialogue and to achieving peace and stability. He welcomed the commitment demonstrated by leaders of politico-military movements and the Government's efforts in that regard. Likewise, good governance was crucial to ensuring successful elections in 2010. Lastly, the revival of economic activities was of the utmost importance. He supported the Secretary-General's proposal to establish an integrated mission in the Central African Republic, which would help ensure implementation of the Strategic Framework and projects financed by the Peacebuilding Fund. He hoped that the establishment of a United Nations integrated office in the Central African Republic and the appointment of a new Special Representative by the Secretary-General would take place shortly and that the international community would respond adequately to the challenges facing the Central African Republic.

13. **Mr. Sumi** (Japan) requested further information on the possibility, raised previously by the Chairperson, of organizing an e-forum involving various sectors of the Central African Republic. He also wished to know when the first review of the implementation of the Strategic Framework was expected to be held. Coordination between the Security Council and the Commission would be of the utmost importance in that regard.

14. **Mr. Onanga M. Ndiaye** (Gabon), commended the Central African political class for the spirit of compromise and sacrifice it had shown, particularly during the inclusive political dialogue, which had led to a number of decisions and recommendations aimed at generating a new political and social momentum. Although the country-specific configuration, along with other United Nations entities and the whole international community, needed to foster that momentum, a task in which the Strategic Framework was an important tool, the Central African authorities had primary responsibility for taking forward the peacebuilding process and improving the overall quality of life in the Central African Republic.

15. While progress must be made in implementing all the commitments and priority actions identified in the Strategic Framework, the first priority was to achieve both security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. To that end, the Heads of State of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) member countries had decided in Libreville in January 2009 to make a major contribution to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in the Central African Republic. It was vital that the CEMAC contribution, as well as funds disbursed by the Peacebuilding Fund, were quickly and exclusively allocated to those activities; otherwise, there was a risk

that all the efforts and progress made thus far would be jeopardized and that the achievement of the other priority actions set out in the Strategic Framework could be compromised.

16. **Ms. Rulumeni** (South Africa), recalling that the success of the inclusive political dialogue held in 2008 showed the commitment and will of the country's Government and people to achieve long-lasting peace and stability, encouraged all parties to seize the opportunity provided by the adoption of the Strategic Framework, which represented the only viable way to achieve peace in the Central African Republic.

17. Her delegation welcomed the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) and other organizations in developing the Strategic Framework. While it recognized the importance of partnerships between the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations and the donor community in peacebuilding processes, it was concerned by the lack of coherence and coordination between the various actors involved.

18. Resources remained the biggest challenge in bringing peace and stability to conflict-stricken countries. Her delegation therefore commended CEMAC for mobilizing funds for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in the Central African Republic. While effective implementation of that programme was critical, the Central African Republic faced other challenges in specific areas of governance and the rule of law, as well as in the promotion and protection of human rights, which must also be addressed to ensure lasting and sustainable development.

19. **Ms. Gallardo Hernández** (El Salvador), commending the Central African authorities for having taken the necessary steps to arrive at the adoption of the Strategic Framework, said that it would give the country-specific configuration, as it continued to support the country's peacebuilding process, a real understanding of the situation on the ground, the progress made and the challenges faced. The Framework also highlighted the national capacity and the political will for peacebuilding that existed in the Central African Republic.

20. The Strategic Framework needed to be dynamic in nature; in that connection, a dynamic vision of the peacebuilding process was perhaps one of the innovative approaches that the Commission had been able to develop and share with the rest of the United Nations system. It was her understanding that the Chairperson would inform the country-specific configuration when monitoring and evaluation activities were to be carried out under the Strategic Framework.

21. While a key aspect of the Commission's work was to channel funds — particularly resources allocated by the Peacebuilding Fund and funds obtained from the donor community — in order to help ensure stable and predictable financing for the peacebuilding process, it was important to remember that the knowledge and experience built up by post-conflict countries could also be transferred, with the support of the international community, to countries engaged in peacebuilding. In that connection, El Salvador, which had itself suffered conflict, was more than willing to share with the Central African Republic its experiences of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, a complex issue that could not be quickly resolved.

22. **Mr. Maliko** (Central African Republic), Minister of Planning, Economy and International Cooperation, speaking from Bangui via audio link, expressed his satisfaction with the adoption of the Strategic Framework and underscored his Government's commitment to work closely with the international community in the priority areas of action established by the Strategic Framework. His delegation was pleased that all speakers had recognized the efforts of the Central African Republic to achieve what had initially seemed impossible. It had been particularly encouraged by the World Bank representative's acknowledgement that the Central African Republic was probably the only country to have reached the completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative only two years after reaching the decision point. Debt relief was essential if solutions were to be found to problems which the Central African Republic lacked the internal capacity to address directly; the support of international partners was also vital.

23. Addressing a point raised by several members, he said that the contributions that his country hoped to receive would be allocated to security sector reform and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, which were interlinked and would stimulate socio-economic development. The

development hubs programme had been established to respond to the pressing needs of the Central African people, most of whom lived in rural poverty.

24. **The Chairperson**, replying to the questions raised by the representative of Japan, said that the forum to be organized in Bangui with the Central African authorities was an outreach exercise to explain to the population at large, including the business community, trade unions, women's organizations, NGOs and the press, the commitments undertaken by the international community and the Central African Republic in signing the Strategic Framework, with a view to increasing the Central African population's ownership of the work to be undertaken.

25. With regard to the six-monthly review process, the first review should be held in October 2009, although, given current economic and financial uncertainties, some issues might be brought forward for earlier consideration if necessary. As the representative of Japan had pointed out, it was important to synchronize the review process with work carried out by other bodies, particularly the Security Council. In that connection, he had recently spoken on behalf of the Commission at a Security Council debate on children and armed conflict. If considered useful, he could also arrange for the Secretary-General's Special Representative in the Central African Republic to attend an informal meeting of the country-specific configuration during his visit to New York in June 2009 in order to discuss with members the practicalities of future work.

Update on the political and security situation in the Central African Republic

26. **The Chairperson**, highlighting the crucial importance of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, said that the worrying security developments of recent months had once again underscored the urgency of launching that process and the need for the participation of all armed groups. It was also vital to implement the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme within the broader framework of security sector reform and to prepare for the 2010 elections by selecting the members of the independent mixed electoral commission.

27. **Mr. Gonda** (Central African Republic), Minister for Communications, Good Citizenship, National Reconciliation and Dialogue Monitoring, speaking from Bangui via audio link, reiterated his country's appreciation for the work of the Chairperson and the members of the country-specific configuration. The follow-up committee established to monitor implementation of the recommendations adopted during the inclusive political dialogue had come into immediate operation, had held its first session and was functioning well. Over the past month, that committee, comprising 25 members, including 9 international organizations, had been seeking to contact all entities responsible for implementing the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue, in order to provide guidance to them. The Government was trying to mobilize resources from its national budget to fund the follow-up committee, and was seeking financing from international stakeholders. In that connection, it welcomed the fact that the remaining balance of the funds already allocated to the Central African Republic by the Peacebuilding Fund would be transferred to the follow-up committee.

28. The political situation in the Central African Republic was becoming more stable following the establishment of a Government open to all stakeholders in the inclusive political dialogue, including the democratic opposition and other political parties, politico-military movements and civil society. The permanent dialogue established by that institutional framework, including the ongoing contact between the Government and the follow-up committee on the implementation of the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue, was very important, since strict application of the recommendations was pivotal to the peacebuilding process. In that connection, the Government had established three fully resourced committees, focusing, on, inter alia, political matters, governance and the security situation.

29. The Government and the follow-up committee were aware of the recent security problems that the Chairperson had mentioned. Of the five politico-military movements identified, only Forces démocratiques populaires de Centrafrique (FDPC) had yet to join the inclusive dialogue, although that movement had signed a peace agreement with the Government, entailing containment, disarmament and the cessation of hostilities, that it had never renounced. The President of the Central African Government had met with the FDPC rebel chief, and BONUCA and UNDP were also engaged in efforts to bring him to the

negotiating table. The Government was confident that, with the involvement of the United Nations and the international community, a successful outcome would eventually be reached.

30. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process was now under way, with the involvement of all the other rebel movements. The steering committee for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration had a detailed list of combatants and was working to establish a joint operational programme, having established a road map and schedule for implementation up to October 2009. It had already reached an understanding with the rebel movements on issues such as eligibility criteria, weapons, and the mechanisms for declaring weapons and combatants. While awaiting the reaction of the country-specific configuration, it was now in a position to start implementing the second stage of the programme, which would involve raising awareness of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process among combatants, and identifying containment locations with the help of the Multinational Force of the Economic Community of Central African States in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX).

31. Since disarmament was key to ensuring steady progress towards the 2010 elections, all stakeholders must have a sense of urgency. The Government would mobilize all the human resources available to it in order to implement the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process; however, coordination was also needed to mobilize additional financial resources since disarmament and demobilization, in particular, would require a significant funding commitment.

Update on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the Central African Republic

32. **Mr. Bozizé** (Central African Republic), Deputy Minister of the Presidency of the Republic for National Defence, Veterans, War Victims, Disarmament and Army Restructuring, speaking from Bangui via audio link, said that the Government of his country was committed to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as well as to political dialogue, including with those still bearing arms, even as the situation on the ground remained tense. His Government intended to commence disarmament, demobilization and reintegration work on the ground based on the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue.

33. With regard to security sector reform, he said that his Government had been able to adhere to the timetable for reform and to begin implementing the recommendations of the visiting United Nations assessment team, but was in need of further technical support from the international community.

34. **Mr. Gambi** (Central African Republic), Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and la Francophonie, speaking from Bangui via audio link, said that the security sector reform process still lacked the resources needed for full implementation. Structures were in place and activities were being undertaken in an effort to ensure national support and ownership of the process. The next round table on security sector reform, to take place in June of 2009, would address further measures to be taken in the context of implementation of the medium-term programme.

35. He thanked the representative of El Salvador for her offer of technical expertise and assistance on security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which would be most helpful to his Government's efforts to pursue key strategic reforms that were essential to restoring peace and security in the Central African Republic.

36. **Mr. Leclerc** (France) said that his delegation shared the Chairman's assessment of the current priorities in the peacebuilding process. He reiterated the Security Council's appeal to the armed groups to meet their disarmament, demobilization and reintegration commitments or to join the process if they had not done so, and commended the Government of the Central African Republic for the encouraging progress it had made in its preparations for that process. Turning to the question of financing, however, he said that while commending the willingness of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC) countries to contribute funding for the process, his delegation joined others in calling for assurances that such funding would be allocated exclusively to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

37. **Mr. Meurs** (United States of America) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the Strategic Framework, as well as the documents on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform provided by the Chairman. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration was indeed an

overriding priority in the security sector reform framework, and was a crucial element in restoring stability. Primary responsibility for the success of both processes rested with the Government in Bangui, which must commit to providing a full accounting of the needs of the 200,000 refugees in the North. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration could not stop at payments to rebel combatants, but must also include a comprehensive commitment by the State to the socio-economic development called for under the Strategic Framework. Nor could security sector reform stop at rehabilitating military infrastructure, but must also include all the interim steps outlined in the Strategic Framework with regard to respect for the population and human rights.

38. With regard to financing, his delegation believed that donor funds would surely follow if the Government showed a serious commitment to the two processes. Use of the CAEMC funds, as intended, for completion of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration would be a major first step. The recent spread of violence in the North was setting the stage for ethnic as opposed to political strife; the two processes were prerequisites for tackling that violence, and also for resolving the long-term problems affecting the Central African Republic.

39. **The Chairman** said that as the Central African Republic had not been represented at the recent discussion of the human rights situation in that country at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the representatives of the Government might wish to comment on the Geneva discussions. While commending the work undertaken to date on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration by the Government, he noted that a number of delegations had raised concerns on financing for that programme, and said that he would examine the topic in greater detail during his upcoming visit to Bangui. He also requested further information on the terms of reference for management of the trust fund to be established by UNDP to handle disarmament, demobilization and reintegration financial issues, and on the status of preparation of the MICOPAX in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Finally, he asked when UNDP would be finalizing the programme document.

40. **Mr. Harborne** (World Bank) said that his delegation commended the efforts made in Bangui to advance the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. As had been noted previously, the activities of various armed groups and even of sections of the military underlined the need for strong linkage with the security sector reform process. The lack of clarity with regard to the focus and financing modalities of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, was thus a matter of concern. Unfortunately, no World Bank resources would be available for that purpose, but the Bank was currently working with the African Development Bank and other partners to establish a new subregional trust fund for the greater Great Lakes Area, to be called the Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Programme. While no final decisions on amounts or objectives had been taken, those funds would most likely be dedicated to community-based recovery activities in areas containing concentrations of ex-combatants.

41. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin) said that his delegation congratulated the Government of the Central African Republic on its efforts to restore lasting peace. In addition to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, he stressed the importance of the 2010 elections as a critical element in the peace process, and thus the need for them to be held in a transparent and inclusive manner in order to ensure the restoration of confidence and trust among the various parties involved. He welcomed the idea of establishing a national independent electoral commission, and urged the Government to give serious consideration to that possibility.

42. **Mr. Gambi** (Central African Republic), Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and la Francophonie, speaking from Bangui via audio link, said that while his Government had in actuality been represented at the recent deliberations of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, a number of the topics discussed at that time had since been overtaken by events. One example was the supposed use of child soldiers in Government militias; while such militias had existed in 2003, they no longer existed at present. With regard to self-defence organizations, he said that grass-roots communities in his country were still subject to abuses from a variety of political and military groups, poachers, and even Chadian farmers seeking pasture. Since the Army was unable to provide security throughout the country, some communities had organized their own defences, and it was possible that children were being used in that context without the

Government's awareness or ability to intercede. The Government had, however, been aware of the use of child soldiers by such armed groups as the Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR) and was working with representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to deal with that issue. Moreover, the rebel groups operating in the north sometimes victimized local communities when obtaining supplies from them; the Government continued to denounce such abuses and was attempting to deploy forces to protect those communities.

43. With regard to the recommendations of the Human Rights Council, he said his Government was setting up working groups and taking other measures to prevent the use of children as cannon fodder by rebel or combatant groups. Turning to the upcoming elections, he said that the political dialogue to date had indeed been inclusive, and that his Government wanted the elections to be inclusive as well. It had established a committee, chaired by a member of civil society, to work on the election code and ensure that the elections were in fact free and secure. His Government counted on the configuration to provide the means to accomplish that task as well as for suggestions on procedures.

44. In response to a request from the Chairman for information on the issue of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration financing and the use of the CAEMC funds, he said that the President of the Republic had publicly stated that a substantial portion of those funds would be used for the process. No money had yet been allocated, but he hoped that more details would be available in time for the Chairman's upcoming visit to Bangui.

45. **The Chairman** said that the question of the CAEMC funds in particular needed to be pursued in greater detail; some delegations had expressed the view that the entirety of those funds should be allocated to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and were concerned at the Government's apparent intention to allocate only "a substantial portion" of them to that end. He thus hoped that his upcoming visit to Bangui would enable him to provide reassurance to those delegations on that score, and stressed the need to improve coordination among members of the country-specific configuration. He reiterated his invitation to members of the configuration to accompany him to Bangui in a demonstration of their willingness to work with the people of the Central African Republic on the priority issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and the elections.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.